The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1663 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1943 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 33, NO. 8

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Labor's loyal enemies—they stick with us through thick and thin—have got a new word for it—absenteeism. And they are now busily using this word as a whip and a scourge on the backs of the great army of American production soldiers.

Absenteeism is a grievous fault. We would be the last to deny it. It cuts into war production, it eats up manpower, it slows down the war effort.

But are the workers who occasionally absent themselves from the job entirely and alone at fault? Is this absence altogether deliberate and voluntary? Is it caused by shirking, by irresponsibility, by lack of patriotism?

So the enemies of labor would have us believe—at least by inference. They turn the heat on labor exclusively. The anti-labor propagandists are trying to sell the public the idea that war workers are making so much money that they can't resist the urge to take a few days off for a prolonged drunk. They are trying to create the impression that absenteeism is caused by mass hangovers.

But what are the facts?

Here They Are!

The facts are that the largest proportion of absenteeism is caused by preventable accidents and preventable illnesses; by unavoidable factors, such as blizzards, floods and transportation breakdowns; by poor housing, by fatigue resulting from excessive working hours; by shortages of materials, by bad scheduling and planning of work by management and by required appearances before Selective Service Boards and other Government agencies.

Only a tiny fraction of absenteeism results from deliberate and irresponsible waywardness by individual workers.

These facts were brought out by studies conducted by the major Federal war agencies who are most deeply concerned with the problem of absenteeism. The survey found that responsibility for absenteeism is shared by management and by local, State and Federal Government, as well as by labor. No attempt was made to hide the facts or to whitewash them. The truth was too obvious.

The toll of preventable accidents in this country since the war began is greater in deaths and disability than casualties suffered by American troops on the field of battle. Such accidents result from lack of proper safeguards, from the speed-up of war production and from the greed of profit-hungry employers, as well as from individual carelessness.

Illnesses in war factories this winter have caused excessive absence. And why? Because millions of war workers were called upon to go to communities where no proper provision for housing and heating had been made. Thousands of them are crowded in unsanitary huts and hovels and trailers and rooming houses. The high cost of living has contributed its share since adequate and proper diet is out of the reach of low-paid workers. Under these conditions, disease thrives.

Remove the Causes

When people talk freely and ignorantly of absenteeism, we'd like to confront them with workers who come to the job day after day only to be told by the foreman that there is no work for them because "the materials haven't arrived." These workers, who are paid on an hourly basis, might indeed grow bitter about absenteeism—their own enforced and unpaid absenteeism.

Now, about excessive working hours. This brings to mind an article we read recently in the Saturday Evening Post about a mid-west war manufacturer whose practice it is to lure his workers into putting in 70 or more hours a week by offering high overtime bonuses. This employer admits his men are ready to drop when they quit work, but he says they recuperate quickly when they see their pay envelopes. What he doesn't realize is that the human body is a delicate machine and will break down from overwork, regardless of high pay. This man and many other employers like him are contributing to absenteeism.

We could go on indefinitely with other examples of absenteeism that is involuntary on the part of the workers and for which inefficient management and poor Government planning are responsible. But the point is that we get nowhere by blame and accusations, whether these are directed against employers, against Government or against labor.

That isn't the way to reduce absenteeism. The way to do it is to remove its causes. And we feel that if workers' housing and diet were improved, if transportation to the job were put on a more efficient basis, if hours of work were kept within reasonable limits, if materials and tools were on hand when the worker reports on the job, if America's war production soldiers were given the credit they deserve for their service to their country instead of constant abuse, absenteeism would cease to be a problem.

AFL Demands Right To Vote For District of Columbia Citizens

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor launched a new drive to obtain the right to vote for citizens of the District of Columbia and to grant them representation in Congress.

A bill prepared by the A. F. of L. and endorsed by the Washington Central Labor Union was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Lesinski of the House District Committee. The bill will be introduced in the Senate at a later date.

The measure sets up qualifications for voters and candidates, designates voting precincts and make provisions for holding primary and final elections.

It provides that a delegate to Congress shall be elected by the citizens and seated in the House of Representatives on a par with delegates and resident Commissioners from Alaska, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and the Philippine Islands.

The delegate from the District, by virtue of his office, is to be chairman of the District of Columbia Board of Commissioners, assuring full knowledge of all details of the District of Columbia government on his part. Thus the citizens of the nation's capital will get a voice and vote in the government of their local affairs by a representative of their own selection.

The A. F. of L. and the Washington Central Labor Union will appreciate support of this bill by local newspapers and all organizations that believe in the American system of government, particularly the various citizens' associations.

Ladies' Garment Workers Donate Million In Wages For War Relief

New York City.—Mayor F. H. La Guardia commended 100,000 members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union in New York who worked on their day off Feb. 20 to donate their wages, totaling an estimated $1,000,000, to the Labor War Chest for relief agencies in this country and abroad. He spoke at a radio broadcast over station WMCA from the workroom of Carmel Brothers, coat manufacturers, at 530 Seventh Avenue.

As workers stood by their cutting tables, Mayor La Guardia told 300 persons assembled in the small room that the action of the union's members throughout the city was setting a fine example of extra work for a good cause.

"I want to congratulate the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union on this novel idea of giving one day's work to relief both here and overseas," he declared. "It is translating into action what we've been doing a great deal of talking about."

David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, said:

"Garment workers are at their sewing machines and cutting tables today to help the Red Cross, the United Service Organizations, relief agencies, organized labor movements in Axis-occupied countries and domestic community aid agencies. They are working also for the martyred populations of Europe and to strengthen the hopes and lessen the agony of suffering human beings."

The union's war relief fund is expected to reach a national goal of $1,500,000.

William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in a telegram to David Dubinsky, stated that the ILGWU demonstration is a "shining example of labor's cooperation with the war effort."

SIU Sailor, Decorated For Heroism, Joins Army To Avenge Father's Death

Washington, D. C.—Maximo Murphy, able seaman, of the Seafarers International Union, was decorated by Captain Edward Macauley of the United States Maritime Commission with the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal, the highest honor to be given seamen.

Murphy's ship was sunk last year in the Caribbean. He pulled 21 crew members aboard a raft, navigated it to land, and then plunged through the jungle for 18 hours to reach civilization and bring aid to his union brothers.

After being returned to the United States, Murphy joined the Army "to avenge my father." His father was ship's carpenter on a vessel which was lost about the time Murphy was torpedoed.

House Urges NLRB To Drop Kaiser Case; AFL Warns Board To Comply 'Or Else'

Green Declares Agency Will Forfeit All Claim To Labor Support If It Persists

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor called upon the National Labor Relations Board as a public duty to comply with the recommendations of the House Sub-Committee on Naval Affairs which has just completed an investigation of the shipbuilding situation on the Pacific Coast.

This committee warned in its report, made public on Friday, that the proceedings begun by the NLRB against the Kaiser shipyards at Portland constitute a "real threat to war production." The controversy, the committee said, may spread to other shipyards, upset the shipyard stabilization agreement and cause many violations of the no-strike policy. The committee recommended that the National Labor Relations Board reconsider its action and take into consideration the danger to war production and the national security. It further recommended that all closed-shop agreements with recognized labor organizations, such as the agreement between AFL unions and the Kaiser management which is involved in the NLRB case, be "frozen for the duration of the war."

Mr. Green declared:

"It is the public duty of the National Labor Relations Board to comply with the recommendations of the House Committee which were made after careful and unbiased study of actual conditions. Everyone else in the nation knows there is a war going on. The National Labor Relations Board must also take cognizance of this fact and guide itself accordingly.

"The issue involved in the Kaiser case is not an academic one. It is a matter of life and death to our soldiers overseas who must depend on the supplies brought to them by fleets of Liberty Ships built in the Kaiser shipyards. Any action from whatever source which interferes with the production of these Liberty Ships constitutes an act of sabotage against America's war effort. Surely no Government agency should place itself in such an indefensible position.

"Yet this is exactly what will happen unless the National Labor Relations Board heeds the recommendations of the House Sub-Committee on Naval Affairs — recommendations which the American Federation of Labor heartily supports.

"If the National Labor Relations Board fails to comply with these recommendations, it will forfeit all claims to the respect and support of the American people and American labor."

The text of that portion of the House committee's report dealing with the Kaiser situation follows:

"Generally speaking, your committee found a stabilized labor condition, insofar as the practical application of wages and hours, union rules, and other regulations were concerned. We believe this to be due primarily to the fact that there exists on the West Coast, after many conferences between the shipbuilders, the workers, and the Government, what is known as a Master Agreement which has done much to stabilize and minimize labor difficulties.

"Interference with Agreement—Recently, and since this Master Agreement was signed, the National Labor Relations Board initiated an action against a Portland shipyard, calling for a hearing on a jurisdictional question between a rival union and the union which had a closed-shop agreement with the shipbuilder. Without going into detail, we feel that the calling of such a hearing at this time may seriously disorganie other yards on the Pacific Coast and constitutes a real threat to war production. The controversy could easily spread to other yards, upset the master agreement, and cause many violations of the so-called no-strike, no-work-stoppage policy underlying the Master Agreement. Your committee feels deep concern over the possible repercussions of this action. We recommend, in order to eliminate discontent and lack of harmony, that the National Labor Relations Board reconsider its orders and, in its discretion, review all the surrounding facts and circumstances, including the threat that is entailed to war production and the national security. It is further recommended that all standing closed-shop agreements with recognized labor organizations be frozen for the duration of the war."

22 AFL Workers Honored By WPB For Ideas To Speed Up War Output

Washington, D. C.—War Production Drive Headquarters paid tribute to organized labor in its announcement of awards giving national recognition to 22 workers in key war plants under contract with American Federation of Labor unions.

The workers were selected for their suggestions to increase output of war goods. A third of the group, selected from among thousands of workers, won Certificates of Individual Production Merit and the remainder received Letters of Honorable Mention.

Besides encouraging members to contribute practical suggestions, said War Production Drive officials, "organized labor played its part in the process of channeling the workers' suggestions to labor-management committees and thence to Washington."

"Honors were almost equally divided between AFL and CIO representation in labor-management committees which submitted this month's winning suggestions," said War Production Drive headquarters.

The AFL workers cited and brief descriptions of their prize-winning ideas follow. Those who won Certificates of Individual Production Merit are:

Edward Walter Steup, setup man at American Type Founders, Inc., in Elizabeth, N. J. (under agreement with an AFL Federal Union), whose suggestion of a new way to form the recess in a gun part saves 20 minutes on each piece.

Edward Dorsen, shell department foreman at International Harvester's Milwaukee Works (under contract with both the Patternmakers and Machinists) whose idea to change purchasing specifications on a certain type of shell already has saved 27,700 pounds of critical copper.

Martin Erhman, Jr., patternmaker at the same International Harvester plant, who suggested the removal of excess finish and excess stock on casting to the tune of 20,000 pounds of steel.

John Rickert, Jr., foreman in the cowl department at the Curtiss-Wright plant in St. Louis (under agreement with the Machinists), whose attachment for a Holgun router increased the rate of the routing operation 228 per cent.

Bernard E. Anielak, shear operator at the same Curtiss-Wright plant, whose idea for preparing stringers used in large airplane wings doubled the production rate on one operation.

John Klock, a shipfitter journeyman at Marinship Corporation in Sausalito, Cal. (under agreement with the Metal Trades), whose ideas on fittings and strongbacks used for placing certain parts in ships saves critical materials and time and helps solve a serious problem in the production of ships.

F. L. Paulson, a rigger leadman at the Marinship yard whose newly designed lifter facilitates work in laying floors and boasts a safety feature in that it prevents the floor from tilting back and forth as it is swung into position.

The AFL workers whose suggestions won Letters of Honorable Mention are:

Jesse Clymer, a machinist in the Paducah, Ky., shops of Illinois Central.

Charles A. Gordon, special engineer of Illinois Central in Chicago.

Arthur L. Foutch, a carman welder of the Illinois Central System's St. Louis Division.

C. H. Smith, repair and assembly man at Caterpillar Tractor Co. in Peoria.

Roy K. Markley, a lathe operator at Caterpillar Tractor.

Dudley Seraphine, worker at International Harvester in Milwaukee.

Milton G. Zimpelmann, worker at International Harvester.

Victor A. Ipsen, worker at International Harvester.

William Engel, welder at International Harvester.

Arnold Mrotek, expediter on fixtures at International Harvester.

Anthony A. Speraneo, foreman at Curtiss-Wright in St. Louis.

Allen P. Rogers, general repairman at Inspiration Consolidated Copper Co., at Inspiration, Ariz.

Bob Bartell, a shipfitter foreman at Marinship Corp.

I. Williamson, a layerout at the same shipyard.

Woodrow Williams, supervisor of production control expediters at the RCA Victor plant in Indianapolis.

AFL WORKER CITED FOR SAFETY AWARD

New York City.—Joe Hlatko was chosen "Safety Ace" of the week by the National Safety Council from the food processing industry. For eleven years an employe of General Mills, Inc., central division, in South Chicago, Hlatko has made three important contributions to safety in his plant.

A member of the Flour, Feed, and Cereal Workers' Union, AFL., Hlatko says accidents are not going to keep the boys in the services from getting their breakfast food if he can help it.

He has arranged for guards around high speed shafts of packing machines, for safety zones and guard rails, and for devices to prevent the men from cleaning their dusty clothes with dangerously powerful air hoses. Hlatko has helped his plant pile up a record of 1,500,000 man-hours without a lost-time accident. He was awarded a $100 war bond and cited for distinguished service by the National Safety Council on a nation-wide radio program.

Green Blasts Anti-Labor Drive In States As Ruse To By-Pass FDR And Hit War Production Program

O'Daniel Takes A Licking

Washington, D. C.—Senator W. Lee O'Daniel, of Texas, who is leading the anti-labor legislative drive in the Southern States with the support of the dastardly "Christian American Association," suffered a crushing defeat in the first round of his campaign.

The Oklahoma State Legislature, after being personally addressed by Senator O'Daniel, killed two measures that he hysterically advocated and adopted a resolution praising organized labor and the Roosevelt administration.

The Oklahoma House Committee on Arbitration and Labor buried O'Daniel's so-called "anti-violence" bill by a vote of 18 to 6. This is the bill adopted in Texas and thereafter espoused throughout the South by the "Christian American Association."

At the same time, the Oklahoma State Senate rejected another O'Daniel proposal which would prohibit unions from contributing to political causes.

The Railway Labor Executives' Association, meanwhile, joined the AFL fight to expose the false propaganda of the "Christian American Association" which, from its headquarters in Houston, has been deluging State Legislatures with "literature" attacking organized labor.

Smarting under their defeat, the sponsors of anti-labor legislation undertook a newspaper advertising campaign smearing the record and the war contributions of American workers.

To offset these attacks, the various State Federations of Labor girded themselves for a bitter fight against the flood of vicious anti-labor bills pouring into the hoppers of State Legislatures.

In Kansas, reactionary interests pushed a bill which would convert nearly every legitimate labor activity into a crime punishable by prison terms and fines. The State Administration refused to support this proposal but presented an almost equally dangerous bill placing restrictions on strikes and picketing but supposedly balancing these with a ban on employer "unfair labor practices."

The Kansas Federation of Labor charged that the anti-labor bills are sponsored chiefly by the notorious "Associated Industries," which recently circularized employers in the State to raise a "war chest" to help put over anti-labor legislation.

Another bill, aimed at breaking union organizations by placing them under strict government control and regulation, has been introduced in almost identical language in more than a dozen State Legislatures. This bill would require unions to register with the State, file lists of members, submit financial statements and give other data which anti-labor employers could use to wreck labor organizations.

Still another anti-union dodge, incorporated in legislation now pending in a number of States, would limit union dues and initiation fees, list qualifications for union officials and restrict free operations of trade unions in other respects.

The "model" bill along these lines is before the Texas State Legislature, the apparent breeding ground for the legislative attacks on labor on the State fronts. Another Texas bill would outlaw the closed shop and require that 75 per cent of a union's income remain in the State.

Other States where dangerous anti-labor measures are pending include Ohio, California, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and practically every State in the South.

All State Federations Are Urged To Guard Against Dangerous Legislation

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor charged that reactionary interests, facing certain defeat of anti-labor legislation in Congress, have launched a concerted campaign to carry out their objectives by the enactment of similar bills in the various state legislatures.

This is an attempt to "by-pass" President Roosevelt and to obstruct him in the direction of the war production program, Mr. Green warned.

He urged all State Federations of Labor to be on the alert for such dangerous bills and to exert all their power to defeat them.

Mr. Green's statement follows:

"War production was more than quadrupled during 1942, the first year of the war. This year labor faces the heavy task of doubling last year's staggering volume of war production. We are confident we can attain this goal, which is vital to victory, if the freedoms of American workers are not restricted and if the hands of the trade unions that represent them are not tied by vicious legislation.

"The splendid production achievements of 1942 were made possible by the hard work of American workers and the all-out cooperation of their trade unions with every program initiated by the government.

"The Congress of the United States understands this and so do the officials of our federal government, led by our Commander-in-Chief, President Roosevelt. Therefore, we are confident that the anti-labor bills now pending in Congress will meet the defeat that they merit.

"Apparently, the selfish, reactionary interests who are the real sponsors of these bills also are aware of this fact. That is why they have now launched a concerted campaign to obtain enactment of similar laws in the state legislatures.

"This is equivalent to stabbing the government and the labor movement in the back. It is an attempt to by-pass the President and the leaders of our Army and Navy and erect obstacles on the home front which will hinder them in the successful prosecution of the war.

"The American Federation of Labor does not question the right or the duty of state legislatures to adopt laws which in their judgment are necessary for the welfare of the citizens they represent. But we do protest most vigorously against the false and misleading propaganda with which the enemies of labor are flooding the members of state legislatures in an effort to induce them to take piecemeal action on issues which in a war emergency must be decided by the federal authorities.

"State legislatures are not in a position to know the facts with regard to the war production program as well as the heads of the War and Navy Departments, the War Production Board and the President, himself. We appeal to them, therefore, not to obstruct the war production program by local legislation but to give our Commander-in-Chief and his trusted aides a free hand in directing it.

"At the same time, the American Federation of Labor calls upon all of its affiliated State Federations of Labor to keep ever on the alert against proposed state legislation which, under cover of supposedly patriotic motives, attempts to hamstring labor. We urge our State Federations of Labor to exert all their power to defeat such bills."

NWLB Rules Firms Cannot Abandon Closed-Shop Contracts During War

Washington, D. C.—The National War Labor Board has adopted the position that for the duration of the war a company cannot abandon a union-shop or closed-shop already established by a prior contract reached through bona fide collective bargaining.

The board's policy on continuance of a union or closed shop clause was set forth for the first time in an opinion written for the board majority by Dr. Frank P. Graham, public member and president of the University of North Carolina.

"The National War Labor Board by the provision for the maintenance of membership, seeks to stabilize the unions in an area of struggle," Dr. Graham wrote. "By provision for the continuance of the established union shop, the board seeks to keep stabilized the union in an area already stabilized. For unions in open shop industries to fight out to the bitter end the battle for the union shop would be most unstabilizing and devastating for war production. Likewise to push union shops back into open shops would unstabilize, for war production, the unions of the millions of American workers who have pledged themselves not to strike but to leave to peaceful arbitrament the security of the unions which they have won after long and arduous struggles.

"The National War Labor Board, in its basic policies, holds that the government will not compel a worker to join a union in order to get a job, and that the government will not use its sanctions during this war to establish or disestablish the union shop.

"By this decision, notice is now given to both workers and management, beyond future misunderstanding or appeal, that no company can take advantage of the board's standard provision for union security to reduce the provision for the union shop to the provision for maintenance of membership, hereafter also for the so-called interim employees; and that no company can take advantage of the no-strike agreement to throw out a union shop previously established by agreement between the parties. This policy is not intended to interfere with lawfully established bargaining rights."

Morgenthau Cites Toledo C.L.U. For Bond Sales and Gift of $3,046

Washington, D. C.—The Central Labor Union of Toledo, O., was given a special citation of honor by the Treasury Department for its drive to spur war bond purchases, which resulted in raising $90,000, and for a $3,046.68 donation to the nation's war effort, representing the proceeds of a Victory Boxing Show put on by the organization.

The citation was handed personally to officials of the Toledo Central Labor Union by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau. It read as follows:

"In recognition of the patriotic and generous donation made to the United States, this citation is awarded to the Toledo Central Labor Union."

The officials who came to the nation's capital for the ceremony were Earl Caton, executive secretary of the Toledo C. L. U. and James Blakeley, vice president of the organization.

N. Y. ELECTRICAL WORKERS GRANTED LARGER PENSIONS

New York, N. Y.—The Joint Pension Committee of the New York electrical industry announced a liberalized pension plan at a luncheon at the Hotel Astor at which nearly 200 veterans of labor, all of them retired members of Local 3, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, were guests. The committee is composed of members of Local 3 and members of several electrical contractors' associations and administers a pension fund for over-age and disabled workers in the electrical industry in New York City.

In 1940 officers of the local and officers of the contractors' associations initiated a pension plan whereby electrical workers on reaching the age of 60 were to receive a monthly pension of $40. This pension was to precede the pension granted by the IBEW which starts at 65. Under the liberalized plan the pension provided by the local was raised from $40 to $50 monthly and disabled members were included as eligible.

SEAFARERS UNIT BUYS $25,160 WAR BONDS

New York, N. Y.—The Atlantic and Gulf District of the Seafarers International Union of North America has purchased $25,160 worth of War Bonds with money withdrawn from the strike and organizational fund and the hospital and burial fund.

NAVAL BATTLES WOUND FATHER AND TWO SONS

Washington, D. C.—An unusual war record is that of Folsom O. Ransom, member of Painters Local 949 (AFL) of San Pedro, California, and his two sons, all three now serving in the U. S. Navy, all wounded in various naval engagements in the South Pacific, and all now recuperating from their wounds in naval hospitals in northern California.

Ransom saw his two boys enter the Navy soon after Pearl Harbor, missed them, so found it convenient to follow them into the service last summer. He was transferred to active sea duty after basic training. He is now in a hospital in San Francisco, a casualty from one of the Solomons naval battles, recovering from shrapnel and bomb wounds. His two boys were also wounded in previous South Pacific naval battles, and like their dad, are in a naval hospital in a northern California city not far from San Francisco.

13 NEW LOCALS CHARTERED BY TEACHERS FEDERATION

Chicago.—Thirteen new locals have been chartered by the American Federation of Teachers (AFL) since Dec. 22, 1942, in one of the most successful organizing campaigns in the union's history.